

## "ME"

Apparently I had displeased my mother who chastised me. I then made one of the wrong moves in my life when I said: "I will tell my Daddy", for it was then that my mother promised me that: "If you come here I will give you something to tell your daddy about."

I was probably at the age of three years at this time; the place was Point Lonsdale situated at the western ~~entrance~~ side of the entrance to Port Phillip Bay at the head of which stands the city of Melbourne, the capital of Victoria.

(1903)  
At this time there stood at Point Lonsdale the original, wooden lighthouse that was built in 1863. Close by there was a new lighthouse built of stone and being equipped with the, then, most modern occulting light equipment. One evening my father who was then the Lighthouse Keeper in charge of the local lighthouse and signal station, raised me in his arms while I placed a match to the wick of the old light for the last time and who himself on the following evening lighted the new light for the first time.

BUT EARLIER (1901)  
At about this time another incident in my very early childhood impinged itself firmly on my mind. This was the occasion of the visit to Melbourne of the then Duke and Duchess of York to perform the opening ceremony of the first Australian Federal Parliament. It was not the opening of Parliament that I remember; what I do remember was the wireless installation in the Point Lonsdale Signal station that communicated with the Royal yacht "Ophir" as she approached Port Phillip Heads. This, almost certainly, was the first occasion upon which ship to shore wireless communication was established from an Australian based station. In later years I came to know a little more about wireless and ship to shore communication but I can still see, after a lapse of some sixty or more years, the blue flame that jumped the "gap" of the spark coil and smell the ozone that resulted. I recall, too, the fox terrier dog that barked at me that day and that left me with a fear of dogs, particularly fox terriers, throughout the succeeding sixty years.

It was the practice then to transfer lighthouse keepers from one lighthouse to another at approximately two-yearly intervals. It came time, therefore, to leave Point Lonsdale but I did return and more will be heard of it later. We moved to Cape Nelson, eight miles from the town of Portland and close to the Victoria-South Australia border. It was at Portland that supplies were collected each week in a horse and cart driven by one or another of the three lighthouse keepers. During a part of our term at Cape Nelson my sister, my brother and myself were the only children on the station. We were rather too young for school so the absence of a school was of no consequence.

Excepting in an experimental form and then only spasmodically wireless was not available in ships at sea in 1903. Sailing ships and steamers alike that passed Cape Nelson regularly signalled their

names to the Cape Nelson signal station which details were forwarded by telegram to the responsible authorities in Melbourne. The newspapers of the day published the names of vessels and the time at which they had passed the signal stations along the coast. On the afternoon of June 19th 1904 the R.M.S. "Australia" signalled her name and, in response, was wished a pleasant voyage. During the early hours of the following morning "Australia" ran aground at Port Phillip Heads and became a total wreck.

During this term at Cape Nelson I experienced my first "holiday". We visited my grandmother and two aunts who conducted a small dairy farm at East Colac inland from the coast and some 140 miles from Cape Nelson. At Cape Nelson we had our own cow that provided us with milk and from which my mother also processed fresh butter. At Colac there were about 15 cows; there were chickens, a couple of pigs, some ducks and a dog "Laddie" that helped to bring in the cows for milking each night and morning. There was also "Dick" the sandy horse that was as temperamental as any horse ever foaled. Dick, if he did not feel disposed to pull the buggy to Colac for provisions, or to take the family to Church on Sunday morning, would sit down in his harness and squeal. Patience, petting and perseverance were the only effective remedies in this case.

Lighthouse keepers were always required to undertake local running maintenance and keep the lighthouse, the signal station and other buildings and surroundings as clean "as the proverbial hounds tooth". The head keeper traditionally kept a watch between 8am and noon and again between 6pm and 10pm. The two assistants, alternating each day, kept watch from 10pm to 2am, 2am to 8am, and noon to 6pm. In addition to these regular watches, seven days per week, all hands were turned to Monday to Friday inclusive between 9am and noon when painting, cleaning, scrubbing and polishing work was undertaken. Large repair works that were beyond the local manpower available were undertaken by works parties from Melbourne. On one occasion several workmen were busy at Cape Nelson. Although these men were expected to provide their own meals it was not uncommon for my mother to bake an extra pie, or pudding, or batch of scones for these men. I recall one particular pie. My mother filled a large pie-dish with scraps of metal, nails, and a few empty cartridge-cases, placed over this one of her special pie crusts, and selected me to deliver this attractive-looking pie when the men knocked off for their lunch. This attempt at humor was very well received by the men and was a subject for discussion in our family long afterwards. Of course, as soon as the men had been given time to fully appreciate the joke, my sister delivered a real meat pie; a pie filled with the best cuts of rabbits caught that morning, and seasoned gravy.

Foxes were rather plentiful at Cape Nelson but, as is a feature of all foxes, were very sly; they were difficult to trap. Sometimes a fox would be caught in a trap set for rabbits and when this ~~happened~~ <sup>occurred</sup> one of two things generally happened; either the fox would chew through his leg where it was caught in the trap and disappear, or the trap peg would be pulled from the ground and the fox depart dragging the trap. In this latter event we would set out to track the fox, following the scratches made by the trap on the ground. Sometimes we would find the trap with the fox's paw in it but the fox gone; sometimes we would not be able to follow the track through bracken fern and scrub but there were occasions when we did find the fox which would be killed and skinned. A fox skin, if carefully tanned, was worth useful money.

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There was provided at Cape Nelson, as at several other lighthouses, a set of equipment known as the "life-saving apparatus". This consisted of highpowered rockets, a variety of ropes, a britchesboy, and ancillaries which, if a vessel were to be wrecked in the vicinity of the lighthouse, ~~there~~ would <sup>provide</sup> be some chance of rescuing those aboard the vessel. In order that this apparatus might be moved to a particular point on the coast, a waggon and a horse to draw the waggon was also provided. The horse and waggon, however, also served as a means of transporting provisions, in the case of Cape Nelson from Portland usually once per week. The old horse was Gypsy. Now Gypsy was almost as cunning as the foxes. Normally Gypsy would be required for duty on Friday mornings. Gypsy, however, always seemed to know when Thursday evenings were on hand as it was usual for this old horse, during Thursday nights to hide herself in a parch of scrub. She learned to open gates; she learned to find a different patch of scrub each week but she never sulked. When she was eventually found she would perform her allotted task willingly and well but there always seemed to be a twinkle in her eye as if to say: "I tricked you didn't I?"

From Cape Nelson we moved to the Split Point lighthouse. The Split Point lighthouse was located on a headland close to the village of Airey's Inlet. In more recent times the name "Airey's Inlet" has been applied on maps and charts to the lighthouse too. Our lives took on a varied turn at Airey's Inlet; there was a school and this was our first attendance at a school the discipline that resulted being something new to us. There was some river fishing, some surf fishing from the beach and some rock fishing at Airey's Inlet. Ample crayfish could be caught from Eagle Rock that sat close to the shore but which could be reached only at low water. There is little better as a meal for a hungry school boy than a crayfish caught from Eagle Rock, cooked in a tin of seawater over a driftwood fire on the beach and helped along with home made bread and butter.

In these days (1906) Cobb & Co. coaches still operated. Bullock teams were also relatively common; our bulk supplies were brought to Airey's Inlet by bullock waggon from Wensleydale. Where now exists that part of the Great Ocean Road, Geelong to Airey's Inlet and beyond, there then was a sandy track. Cobb & Co. coach left Geelong after an early breakfast, stopped to change horses at Torquay and reached Airey's Inlet about nightfall. Passengers generally walked up sandy hills to ease the strain on the horses, climbed aboard the coach again on the crest of the hill and rode down the other side.

On this occasion we were transferred again rather more quickly than usual; we spent but 1 year and 8 months at Airey's Inlet. In January 1908 we were instructed to move to Wilsons Promontory, the southernmost lighthouse on the Australian mainland. A Cobb & Co. coach carried us to Geelong where we joined a train for Melbourne in commencement of a new adventure that would involve a sea voyage which was something quite different in our young lives. It was an adventure too in that, while in the past our supplies had always been delivered by road be it sometimes by bullock waggon, we would now be dependent upon sea transportation for the necessities of life. It has been said that: "Variety is the spice of life", and surely there was variety in our young lives.

We were now about to proceed to one of the most isolated lighthouse stations and where bulk supplies of provisions and other necessities of life would be delivered only each three months. It was necessary, therefore, that bags of flour, bags of sugar, cases of biscuits and of jam and of many other things must be ordered ahead. There was also a need to place orders for large quantities of oil for the light, coal for cooking and heating and fodder for the horse but this was the responsibility of the keeper being relieved and not my father's responsibility until the next orders were due.

We were astir very early on the morning of departure on our great adventure. We said a sad farewell to the relations who had cared for us during our few days in Melbourne and travelled by train to Williamstown, an outer suburb, where we were to join the Lighthouse steamer "Lady Loch". My father had served some time at sea in past years and was at home in the "Lady Loch" but my mother's experience at sea had been limited to that of a passenger in the "Casino" from Melbourne to Portland when I was but a few weeks old and of which voyage I, naturally, remembered nothing. None of us, my brother or sister or myself really knew anything of life at sea excepting that which we had seen from lighthouses ashore.

The run down the Bay, from Williamstown to Queenscliff, was quite pleasant. ~~and~~, As we passed out through the Heads between Point Lonsdale and Point Nepean there was considerable interest in now seeing those places from the sailors point of view. The "Loch" as she ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> always familiarly known was a single-screw steamer of yacht-like design - black hull, tall yellow funnel, two nicely raked masts and white deckhouses. Although the "Lady Loch" invariably carried one or two families to or from "outside" lighthouses, she was ill-equipped for the task. There were two or three so-called staterooms but generally speaking passengers were forced to sleep on settees or anywhere else that was available under cover. We rolled, as only the old "Loch" could roll, along the coast and were abeam of Cape Schanck late that afternoon. As night settled over the ship we "turned in" and tried to sleep but without very much success. The excitement; the strange noises; the motion of the ship and seasickness did not encourage sleep. At sometime about 4am we passed Wilsons Promontory and anchored in the shelter of Waterloo Bay a little to the Eastward of the "Prom". When daylight came in, the ship was moved into East Bay, an indent on the eastern side of the Promontory and again anchored. A whale-boat (sometimes in these circumstances called a work-boat) was loaded with boxes of personal effects, cases of stores and, for ballast, some bags of coal. We were placed on top of this mixed cargo and pulled ashore to the East Landing where we stepped ~~aboard~~, with some difficulty, onto the granite rocky shore of Wilsons Promontory. While the boat returned again and again for further cargo we commenced our long walk to the lighthouse and the quarters that would be our home for almost 2½ years, rising as we did some 350 feet above sea level.

Wilson's Promontory in addition to having a particularly important navigational lighthouse also had a particularly

important signal station. Every vessel, sailing vessel or steamer, that passed the "Prom" signalled her name; many vessels that had left a distant port perhaps months previously were given orders from their owners or agents through the Wilsons Promontory signal station as to their next movement. The type of order would follow the ~~morseying~~ pattern: "You~~x~~ are ordered to proceed to Newcastle direct". The morse lamp was not in use when we first were transferred to Wilsons Promontory with the result that the international code of flag signalling by day was the only means of conveying information. A vessel that expected orders through the "Prom" would arrange ~~to~~ speed to ensure passing there during daylight hours. In due course the morse lamp was introduced, the first steamer to communicate with the Prom by morse lamp being the Adelaide Steamship Coy steamer "Marloo". In due course other ships were equipped with a morse lamp and officers trained in its use. I, although still a boy, soon became proficient in the use of the morse lamp and indeed with all other forms of approved signalling including semaphore and the international code. Sometimes, during a Sunday evening when, as often happened, a number of vessels would pass the Prom en-route from Sydney to Melbourne, it was not uncommon for my father to be talking by morse lamp to one ship at sea while I was talking to another.

Although the "Lady Loch" brought bulk supplies but once each three months, it ~~is~~ was usual for one of the small steamers - the "Wyrallah", the "Queenscliffe" or the "Moonah", or perhaps the "Despatch", to stop engines in either East Bay or West Bay depending upon the weather conditions and pass to our small boat that would put out, mail, newspapers, sometimes fresh meat and sometimes fresh butter. Usually "mail day" was Thursday but this sometimes was Sunday. Usually "Wyrallah" was our mail steamer and as soon as she was sighted emerging from "Little Burke Street", a narrow passage between the mainland and a small island, the cry would go up "WYRALLAH", often contracted to "WYWUP" which would be the signal for the boats crew to hasten to the landing and get the boat launched be it day or night, fine or foul, wet or dry. It was rare for the "Wyrallah" to by-pass the Prom because of weather and this only if a southerly gale had built up dangerous seas at both the East and the West landing.

Once while we were at the Prom a steamer that has run short of bunker coal due to a long spell en-route of bad waether, struggled under the lee of the headland making only sufficient steam by birning hatch covers, wooden derricks and doors from the ship's fittings. On another occasion a collier bound Melbourne from Newcastle, the "Lady Mildred", went ashore in Waterloo Bay in fog and became a total wreck. The crew came ashore at Wilsons Promontory and lived with us until they were picked up by another steamer soon after their ship was wrecked.

We children were now ~~xxxxxx~~ coming to the age when some form of education was a real necessity. For a time we had a Governess who thoroughly enjoyed the free life of Wilsons Promontory and its ample fresh sea air. Whether we learned very much I rather doubt.

Accidents and illness at "outside" lighthouses always, fortunately, seem to be rare occurrences. When such misfortunes overtake those who tend the isolated lighthouses newspaper headlines are usually made. During our term at Wilsons Promontory but one illness of note overtook my brother, my sister and myself; we, together, contracted whooping cough which at any time is a somewhat distressing complaint. At Wilsons Promontory three cases of whooping cough was, to my mother, something of a tragedy. The nearest doctor and chemist were located at Foster some 60 miles from the "Prom" and connected to the "Prom" only by a track over which nothing but a man on horseback could travel. Fortunately, however, there was telephonic connection between these two places. A telephonic consultation between my father and the Foster doctor resulted in the telephone-line inspector packing into his saddle-bag a bottle of medicine and setting out on the long and lonely trip to the Wilsons Promontory lighthouse. As was the practice when the inspector made his periodical inspection trips along the telephone line, a night-stop, for rest to both man and horse, was made at the Darby rest house. It was not, therefore, until the end of the second day after leaving Foster that our bottle of medicine was delivered and our coughs eased.

A devastating bushfire raged through Wilsons Promontory National Park and crept closer to our settlement than was comfortable. We found the heat and smoke from the bushfire very uncomfortable. A few days later and when the fires had died down, my father and I climbed the mountain behind the lighthouse and walked several miles towards Oberon Bay. Scattered on the ground were many dead animals that had been overcome by the fire. There were kangaroos, koalas and, rather strangely, two native cats. One of our milking goats that, apparently, had been cut off by the fast-travelling fire was also found dead on the mountain slope.

There was always good fishing at Wilsons Promontory. From the rocky shore we caught rockfish, leather-jackets, sweep and crayfish; from the boat we caught flathead and barracouta. Fishing for sweep was an interesting procedure. Usually we took a "limpet" from the rocks as bait for a rockfish. In turn the rockfish would be used as bait in a net to catch a crayfish which in turn would be used as bait for the sweep. The sweep is an epicure in the fish kingdom.

We, all too soon, were time expired at Wilsons Promontory, so, once again, pictures were removed from the walls and with kitchen utensils, crockery and glassware, blankets and bed linen, and the piano were packed in specially designed cases, lowered on the "flying fox" to the East landing and sent aboard the "Lady Lock". We said a rather sad farewell to the "Prom" and trekked this time back to the Point Lonsdale lighthouse which I remembered rather vaguely for the reasons explained earlier.

State School No. 3322 still stands at Point Lonsdale and it was there that I commenced my rather short but concentrated school life. Now, at the age of 12 years, I had the benefit of but 2 years regular schooling. During the next 2 years I succeeded in holding

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a place in the 5th Grade. I, however, retained my interest in shipping and in ship to shore signalling; I also developed an interest in gardening. I recall that I was, by popular vote within the School, allotted a prize for gardening.

My interesting life was almost brought to an abrupt end while we were, on this occasion, at Point Lonsdale. One fine summer evening, while my brother and myself were swimming near the pier, my brother who was not then a swimmer of any note, got into difficulties in deep water. I, who was too anything but a swimmer of note, and without weighing the possible consequences, attempted to bring my brother ashore. My father, who was watching his two sons from the pier, and who soon appraised the situation, brought my brother ashore little the worse for wear. Someone else was bending over me on the beach when I regained consciousness. My recompense for my efforts was a period in bed ~~with~~ under a doctor's care. Apparently I did not suffer any serious ill-effects as I was soon back at school. Whether it was because of my knowledge of the subject, or whether it was because of my semi-drowning episode I am not sure; I was soon, however, elected within the School as the "official" umpire when we played Australian Rules football.

Some 20 miles to the eastward of Point Lonsdale and visible when the weather permitted is Cape Schanck. It was to Cape Schanck that we were transferred when our term at Point Lonsdale expired. A short sea voyage across Port Phillip Bay from Queenscliff to Dromana and a land voyage of 15 miles by road soon found us at the last lighthouse at which I was to live as a permanent residence.

As at Cape Nelson and Wilsons Promontory rock fishing at Cape Schanck was a repaying proposition. Rabbits in the area were plentiful and many were the rabbits that we caught in traps or shot. We used the flesh as food and to help the hens produce eggs. The rabbit skins were dried and packed and sent to Melbourne, the proceeds from which helped to keep us supplied with shoes and other items of necessity and occasional pleasure.

The Cape Schanck school was always known to us as the "Blacks Camp" school as it was situated about 3 miles from the lighthouse at a place locally known as Blacks Camp. Sometimes we were taken to school in the Lighthouse waggon drawn by a tall chestnut horse known as Tom; sometimes I drove the horse and waggon to school and after leaving Tom to fend for himself in the school paddock during school hours, drove home again when school closed. A feature of this school was that it was a "half-time" school; it functioned on Monday, Wednesday and Friday of one week, followed by Tuesday and Thursday of the following week. On the intervening school days the one and only teacher attended the Main Ridge school some miles away and which too was a half-time school. This old school which consisted of one small room and which carried the recognition number 2168 was finally closed in 1921 and the building sold for removal. It cost the purchaser £82. *THIS SCHOOL HAD BEEN INITIALLY OPENED IN JULY 1879.*

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We had been resident at Cape Schanck perhaps 18 months when my father said to me without warning: "I cannot keep you any longer; I have arranged a job for you." With little time to think about this new development in my life, my few personal belongings in a box and myself were loaded into the waggon. ~~and~~, With old Tom drawing the waggon, my father took me to Dromana. First he took me to a house that I had never previously seen and introduced me to an old lady. I was told: "This is where you will live and this is the lady to whom you will pay 12/6d per week for board and lodgings." I was then taken to the local semi-official Post Office and again introduced to an old lady and this time told: "This is where you will work and this is the lady who will pay you 15/- per week." I was then given by my father a golden sovereign such as I had never previously handled and told: "This will be a start in life." My father then went back to the Cape Schanck lighthouse while I, who had never previously been away from home alone, started out on a life of adventure. I periodically returned home on short visits and regularly corresponded with my mother until she passed to her final rest 50 years later being pre-deceased by my father some 10 years earlier. I never did return "home" on anything resembling a permanent basis.

My "official" job of work at Dromana was in the capacity of what then was known as a "Telegraph Messenger", which, as the designation implies was the delivery of telegrams. Telegraph Messengers of the past, however, were "handy men" or more correctly "dog's bodies" who were expected, in addition to delivering telegrams, to clean door knobs, wash and re-fill inkwells, wash windows, keep the Post Mistress supplied with chopped wood, collect the Post Mistress's meat from the butchers, attend to the small telephone exchange and, when he had proved his reliability and honesty, sell stamps and deliver letters over the Post Office counter. Still later, when he had developed the ability, he was required to receive and transmit telegrams on the morse circuit connecting Dromana, Sorrento, and Mornington with Melbourne. My earlier morse lamp operating ability gave me a good start in this latter regard and soon I was almost "running" the little Post Office while the Post Mistress sat before her fire on cold winter days. Between 8 30am and 8 pm, with such time as was possible to find for lunch, I slaved at the Dromana Post Office Mondays to Saturdays inclusive.

From the golden sovereign that was given to me by my father when I first arrived at Dromana I paid a small deposit on a second-hand bycycle which I used on my messenger duties and to travel from my residence to work and return. Sometimes, after my Saturday's work was over, I would mount my bycycle and ride it 15 miles to Cape Schanck to visit my folk and return Sunday evening or very early Monday morning. As may be easily calculated there was a difference of 2/6d between my income and my regular expenditure for board and lodgings. Somehow, from this 2/6d I was able to pay off the amount still owing on my bycycle and, very occasionally, visit without a partner the local weekly dance and card evening. Laundry was included in my board and lodging but it soon became necessary to purchase some new clothes. This was a problem that I had to face alone.



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As can be judged, my basic education was extremely limited. If I were to decide to make the Post Office my future source of livelihood it would be necessary to obtain permanent appointment to the Commonwealth Public Service and this in turn would make it necessary to qualify through an entrance examination. My education was not then up to the standard required to pass this rather simple qualifying examination. By good chance the local School Teacher sympathised with me in my predicament. Not only did he encourage me to study; he gave me access to suitable books and all at no expense to me. However, as there were only Sundays, and evenings after 8pm, during which I could study, progress was slow. I attempted two entrance examinations in other towns but failed dismally. In due course, however, a vacancy was advertised at the Flinders Post Office, some 15 miles over the mountain from Dromana and some 10 miles to the east of Cape Schanck. There were two entrants for this examination and my joy was unbounded when it was announced that I had achieved a few marks more than my competitor. I left Dromana and travelled to Flinders and started a new life there, but again I received the sum of 15/- per week and paid 12/6d per week for my board and lodgings, which again included laundry. Now, however, I was issued with an official Post Office uniform which eased my clothing difficulties to some extent. There was another advantage; the Post Office was closed each Wednesday at 1pm which meant that each Wednesday afternoon was free. Some Wednesday afternoons I spent with an old fisherman who had befriended me and in whose fishing boat I spent many pleasant hours. The occasional visit to Cape Schanck on Saturday evening or Sunday continued but this came to an end when my folk were transferred once again and this time to Cliffy Island which lies some 19 miles to the northeast of Wilsons Promontory and which, in fine weather, can be seen from the "Prom" lighthouse.

In due course I was relieved from my Messenger duties at Flinders for a 3-weeks vacation period. I travelled to Melbourne, joined the little steamer "Queenscliffe" en route to Sale in the Gippsland Lakes, and was put ashore around midnight twentyeight hours later at Cliffy Island. Cliffy Island is nothing but a solid rock without vegetation of any description excepting for a small amount of "pig-face" that grows here and there on the rock face. The Island is unprotected from the elements and long days may pass when it is quite impossible to land at or be taken from the Island. There is the lighthouse and associated storeroom and there are three houses occupied by the lightkeepers; that is Cliffy Island. I spent but a little over a week at Cliffy Island when it became apparent that, if I did not soon leave, I might be marooned there long past my leave period. I had expected to be there for at least a fortnight. The "Wyrallah" that used to deliver our mail at Wilsons Promontory was due to pass Cliffy Island one evening about tea time and as the wind was freshening and the sky looking ominous I decided to board "Wyrallah" and this I did in a rising sea. Next morning "Wyrallah" entered Gippsland Lakes and tied up at the wharf at what was then Cunningham but which later was known as Lakes Entrance. Later that day the ship moved up the river to Bairnsdale from where I travelled by train to Melbourne and so back to Flinders.

The first world war, the 1914-1918 war, the war to end all wars was now under way. There was the Gallipoli Campaign about to develop. Flinders, which was the mainland terminal of the Victoria-Tasmania telegraph cable was provided with a military guard. A few men from Flinders entered the Army or the Navy. I was yet too young to enlist; I did, however, manage to pass another Post Office examination and, in being promoted, was transferred to a new office at Woomelang in the Malley country of Victoria.

#### POST OFFICE

At Woomelang there were but the Postmaster and myself. On three mornings each week mail was despatched to outlying places as early as 6am; each evening as late as 11pm mail was received from the Melbourne to Mildura train. During the day there was counter work which was considerable in that wheat-growing centre; there was a daily mail delivery; there was telegraph traffic and there was a telegraph delivery service. Woomelang was a testing ground for any young enthusiast. It is perhaps not unreasonable, therefore, that after spending one very hot summer in Woomelang I applied for a vacancy back at Flinders and which was created by the enlistment of the young man in the position there similar to that I held at Woomelang. Rather unexpected but with considerable satisfaction my application for the Flinders transfer was approved; I returned to Flinders and was once again with old friends, and I must admit with a workload much less than that which I had carried at Woomelang.

When I left Flinders for Woomelang, tall and willowy Marjorie kissed me and cried. When I returned to Flinders but a few months later Marjorie had married and left the district.

I needed a dentist's attention. I rode my bicycle 15 miles to Bittern and from there travelled by train to Melbourne. The dentist extracted a dozen teeth. I returned to Bittern by train and rode my bicycle 15 miles to Flinders.

I soon became restless in that my friends were enlisting while I was continuing to live a life of relative ease. I applied to the Post Master General's Department for leave to enlist. I was refused leave on the basis that my telegraph operating ability was valued. There was, however, no manpower control under which I could be forced to remain in civil employment. I tendered my resignation from the Commonwealth Public Service and soon this resignation was accepted which proved, to my way of thinking, that I was not indispensable as had been suggested. I was forthwith accepted by the Royal Australian Navy, drafted to a wireless school in Melbourne, and commenced training.

In due course I was given a 2nd Class railway ticket to Sydney and instructed to report aboard the troopship H.M.A.T. "Wiltshire" officially known as "A18". I had already seen "Wiltshire" from the Cape Schanck lighthouse and she appealed to me as my future home. Rumor said that she would soon leave Sydney for the United Kingdom.